

## Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
-----101505Z 124809 /41

P 101319Z FEB 77  
FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 512

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 AMMAN 0811

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PFOR, JO, US, XF  
SUBJECT: VIEWS OF EX-PRIME MINISTER RIFAI

SUMMARY: EX-PRIME MINISTER RIFAI, WHOSE INFLUENCE IS STILL CONSIDERABLE WITH KING HUSSEIN AND WHO MAY RETURN AS PRIME MINISTER AS PEACE PROCESS GAINS SPEED, BELIEVES KING SHOULD BECOME MORE ACTIVE IN CURRENT DIPLOMACY OF MIDDLE EAST. HE SAYS KING SHOULD FRANKLY TELL SADAT AND ASAD THAT US AND ISRAEL WILL NOT ACCEPT PLO AT OPENING OF GENEVA, AND THAT ARABS SHOULD GO AFTER RETURN OF TERRITORY AS FIRST ISSUE, LEAVING PALESTINIAN QUESTIONS FOR LATER STAGE OF CONFERENCE. JORDAN SHOULD BE READY TO ADMINISTER WEST BANK UNDER UN UMBRELLA UNTIL IT HOLDS A REFERENDUM WHICH RIFAI CONVINCED WOULD PRODUCE REASSOCIATION OF EAST AND WEST BANKS. HE BELIEVES GENEVA CONFERENCE COULD POSSIBLY RESULT IN OUTRIGHT FAILURE ("ALTHOUGH NO ONE WOULD DECLARE IT") OR (LESS LIKELY) SHORT TERM SUCCESS. MORE REALISTICALLY, HE SAYS, HE SEES PROSPECTS FOR INTERIM STEPS WITHIN FRAMEWORK OF CONTINUING GENEVA CONFERENCE. KEY TO EVEN THAT DEGREE OF SUCCESS, HOWEVER, IS GOLAN II STEP CONSISTING OF INITIAL PULL BACK OF FOUR OR FIVE KILOMETERS. RIFAI'S PENCHANT FOR ACTION BY JORDAN FITS KING HUSSEIN'S OWN PERSONALITY, AND HE HAS UNIQUE AND NEEDED APPROACH TOWARD SPECIFICS IN PEACE PROCESS,

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BUT HIS NOTION OF LIKELIHOOD ARABS PRESENTLY CAN PUT PALESTINIAN QUESTION ON BACK BURNER IS QUITE PROBABLY PREMATURE. END SUMMARY.

1. IN SERIES OF CONTINUING DISCUSSIONS, I MET WITH EX-PRIME MINISTER RIFAI FEBRUARY 9. HE SAYS HE SEES KING HUSSEIN THREE TIMES A WEEK AND IS PRESSING HIM TO

ABANDON HIS CURRENT ADVISERS' FOREIGN POLICY OF DRIFT AND REPLACE IT WITH MORE ACTIVE JORDANIAN ROLE IN PEACE PROCESS.

2. RIFAI IS ADVISING KING HUSSEIN TO HAVE FRANK SESSION WITH SADAT AND ASAD, TELLING THEM THAT NEITHER ISRAEL NOR US WILL ACCEPT PLO. THUS, ARABS MUST NOW DECIDE TO SPLIT ISSUE OF TERRITORY FROM THAT OF PALESTINIAN RIGHTS. LATTER CAN BE RESERVED FOR LATER STAGE AT GENEVA AND PLO TOLD THAT IT NEED NOT GET INTO NEGOTIATIONS NOW. ARABS WILL HANDLE TERRITORY ISSUE AT GENEVA AND THEN WORK OUT WHO GETS WEST BANK WITH PLO LATER. ONE TACTICAL DEVIDE TO DO THIS IS TO ALLOW GENEVA TO GO AHEAD ON BASIS OF UNSC RES. 338, AND APPROVED UNSYG LETTER OF DECEMBER 1973 WHICH SAYS PARTIES MUST AGREE ON NEW ATTENDEES. PLO ATTENDANCE CAN EVEN BE DISCUSSED AS FIRST ITEM OF BUSINESS.

3. RIFAI FEELS KING MUST BE BOLD AND ARTICULATE THIS ASSESSMENT FOR ARAB LEADERS. HE DEPLORES WHAT HE CALLS MUSH COMING FROM BADRAN GOVERNMENT -- E.G., PLO MUST GO TO GENEVA, JORDAN WILL BE THERE AS A CONFRONTATION STATE. ("WHAT DOES THAT MEAN" HE ASKS).

4. RIFAI BELIEVES COMBINATION OF FUNCTIONAL (I.E. PALESTINIAN RIGHTS) AND TERRITORIAL WORKING GROUPS WILL HELP TO FOCUS EFFORTS AT GENEVA. SOVIETS SHOULD BE KEPT OUT OF THESE AND US WILL HAVE TO STAY OUT, BUT CAN MEET BILATERALLY WITH PARTIES TO HELP WITH RESOLUTION OF  
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ISSUES. JORDAN SHOULD UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES AGREE TO NEGOTIATE JOINTLY WITH PLO. IT WOULD BE LIKE GOING TO NEGOTIATING TABLE WITH "A SCORPION IN YOUR SHIRT."

5. JORDAN'S ROLE WOULD BE TO TAKE BACK TERRITORY UNDER A UN UMBRELLA, NOT AS JORDAN. TRUSTEESHIP, LIMITED IN TIME, CAPPED BY A UN-RUN REFERENDUM MIGHT WORK. JORDAN ALREADY PAYS MOST OF CIVIL SERVANTS ON WEST BANK AND THEY COULD KEEP WORKING UNDER UN. IF ISRAELIS WANTED MORE GUARANTEES OF JORDAN'S ROLE IT COULD BE WORKED OUT. RIFAI IS SURE A FAIR REFERENDUM WOULD RESULT IN A LINK WITH JORDAN.

6. LOOKING FURTHER AHEAD AT GENEVA, HE SEES THREE CHOICES FOR RESULT. ONE IS COMPLETE FAILURE. IT COULD BRING DOWN SADAT AND POSSIBLY ASAD AND HUSSEIN AND COULD TURN THEM OR REPLACEMENT REGIMES BACK TO WAR AND THE SOVIETS, POLARIZING THE AREA AGAIN. HOWEVER IT IS ALSO HARD TO GET A CONFERENCE LIKE GENEVA

TO DECLARE FAILURE, IN EFFECT IT BECOMES SELF PERPETUATING  
BECAUSE RISK OF DECLARING FAILURE IS TOO GREAT.

7. SECOND GENEVA POSSIBILITY IS QUICK SUCCESS -- IN  
TWO OR THREE YEARS -- IN ARRANGING GENERAL SETTLEMENT.  
THIS IS NOT REALISTIC. US CANNOT MUSTER PUCH NECESSARY  
TO BRING ISRAELIS TO SUCH A POSITION. THERE IS TOO  
BIG AN INCENTIVE TO HAGGLE BETWEEN THE SIDES.

8. THIRD AND MIDDLE OUTCOME IS FOR INTERIM STEPS IN  
FRAMEWORK OF CONTINUING GENEVA CONFERENCE. ISRAELIS  
WANT THIS AND ARABS 1) WILL FIND IT HARD NOT TO TAKE  
TERRITORY AS A MEASURE OF PROGRESS AND 2) FURTHERMORE  
CANNOT STAY TOGETHER UNLESS EACH ARAB PARTY GETS  
SOMETHING. THIS ACCEPTANCE OF INTERIM STEPS CAN BE  
MADE TO EVOLVE AS GENERAL WORK GOES AHEAD. SINAI III  
IS A FOREGONE CONCLUSION. ISRAELIS ALREADY WILLING,  
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WITH SOME PUSH, TO GIVE BACK LINE FROM AL ARISH TO RAS  
MOHAMMED.

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FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 513

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EXDIS

9. BUT GOLAN II IS THE KEY TO KEEP ARABS TOGETHER AND  
SHOULD COME FIRST. HERE HE THOUGHT IDEA MIGHT BE TO  
DIVIDE GOLAN NORTH TO SOUTH INTO THREE ZONES OF  
ROUGHLY EQUAL WIDTH. EASTERN-MOST ZONE -- PERHAPS  
FOUR OR FIVE KILOMETERS -- WOULD BE GOLAN II. ISRAELIS

COULD KEEP INTELLIGENCE STATION ON JEBEL ASH SHEIKH. STATION NEAR KUNEITRA COULD BE US-MANNED LIKE SINAI STATION. ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS WOULD HAVE TO BE ABANDONED. IDEA OF ADDITIONAL ZONES AND CONTINUING CONFERENCE WOULD HELP PERSUADE ASAD TO ACCEPT THIS, AND IT WOULD BE SOMETHING OF INTEREST TO HIM NOW. IF EGYPT AND SYRIA MADE SUCH AN INTERIM STEP, JORDAN COULD THEN DO SO ON WEST BANK. WEST BANK I WOULD INVOLVE SAME TERRITORY THAT ISRAELIS ENVISAGE GIVING BACK UNDER ALLON PLAN. ISRAELIS, RIFAI BELIEVES, WOULD THEREFORE BE WILLING TO DO THIS. THERE MIGHT BE OPEN BORDERS ON WEST BANK, ALTHOUGH POSSIBLE ISRAELI CONTROL OF BRIDGE CROSSING WOULD BE TOUGH ISSUE.

10. RIFAI SAYD HE HAS BEGUN HIS OWN CAMPAIGN FOR HIS VIEWS, BESIDES WORKING DIRECTLY ON KING HUSSEIN. HE HAS MET WITH ALL OF THE PLO LEADERS IN AMMAN AND URGED THEM TO MEET PLO GROUP COMING TO AMMAN ON FEBRUARY 12 FOR PLO-GOJ DIALOGUE. RIFAI SAYD THIS PLO GROUP IS NOW CONVINCED, THROUGH HIS " MODEST EFFORTS", THAT US  
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AND ISRAEL WILL NOT PERMIT PLO TO ATTEND GENEVA. ALSO, GROUP BELIEVES THAT PLO CAN CONTINUE TO BE TRUE TO ITS NO-COMPROMISE WITH ISRAEL POSITION ONLY BY NOT ATTENDING GENEVA. RIFAI SAID ZUHAIR MUHSIN (OBVIOUSLY INSPIRED BY SYRIANS) IS SAYING THIS PUBLICLY. OTHERS IN PLO AGREE ARABS NOW MUST CONSIDER THAT THEIR FIRST PRIORITY IS TO GET BACK LOST TERRITORY AND THAT THEY SHOULD NOT WASTE TIME AND EFFORT BRINGING PLO TO A NEGOTIATION WHERE PLO'S ONLY ROLE WILL BE NEGATIVE AND WOULD TRY TO WRECK THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS.

11. COMMENT: I HAVE REPORTED RIFAI CONVERSATION AT LENGTH BECAUSE OF UNUSUAL AND INTRIGUING CONCRETENESS OF HIS IDEAS ON NEXT MIDEAST STEPS, IN A PERIOD WHEN MOST VIEWS ON MIDEAST ARE EXTREMELY VAGUE. RIFAI, AS USUAL, HAS BEEN BUSY SEEING PEOPLE AND FORMING HIS OWN THOUGHTS. WHILE MANY OF HIS IDEAS ARE NOT NEW, THEY MAY RE-SURFACE IF KING DECIDES TO BRING RIFAI BACK INTO POSITION OF INFLUENCE. THIS IS MORE AND MORE LIKELY AS NEGOTIATING PROCESS GATHERS MOMENTUM.

12. SUGGEST DEPARTMENT REPEAT AS DESIRED.  
PICKERING

SECRET

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**TAGS:** PFOR, JO, US, XF, (RIFAI, ZAYID)  
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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
22 May 2009  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009